



JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER 2003



have friends

## PASTOR'S CORNER

We sing the song, Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. We love the idea that peace can begin with us until we pause and ask ourselves, what are we to be doing to bring peace on earth. Until we learn to turn our cultural understanding of making peace upside down we will romanticize the idea of peace, but will not understand how we could possibly turn around a world filled with violence.

The war in Iraq is not going well, not for the Iraqis or the allies. With the recent bombing of the UN Headquarters and now the apparent civil war between religious factions, it is apparent that our government will not bring peace to the region or protect us from terrorism.

After the bombing of the UN headquarters we devoted the Sunday School discussion to ask ourselves the question, if peace begins with people of faith, what is it that we must do. It was immediately recognized how difficult it is for us to believe it could begin with us. We gravitated to thinking what our president or the allies should do. We could hardly get past the understanding that we are to be a voice to the powers, but we were powerless to face people with bombs and guns determined to avenge the wrongs they had suffered or to fulfill a call from God to rid the world of the infidels. I will share the ideas from our class discussion.

First, we must accept our powerlessness. We are not called to make peace but to sow the seeds of peace. The violence today is the product of the seeds of violence that has been growing for years. In the same way it will take time for the seeds of peace to bear fruit. The first step may be to understand the reasons for the violent acts. We must engage these people with respect and understand their frustrations. To understand is not to condone.

We must avoid fixing blame for the war in Iraq. We can hold our leaders accountable for their decisions, that is not the same as blaming them. It is said that while America has four percent of the world's population, America consumes forty percent of the world's resources. America is an island of wealth in an ocean of poverty. Now the waves of poverty are crashing in on our island. If we wish to preserve our island of privilege in this great ocean of poverty and suffering then Our president has made the right decision. It is no accident that the conflict today is focused on Arab peoples and people of the Muslim religion. These are the countries with large oil reserves. It may be a good first step to voluntarily give up consumption and goods as a way to share with the world, but we must also understand that giving up of our own free choice is not the same as having it ripped from us violently. Many of those involved in the violence we deplore have had their homes and property ripped from them. We cannot understand such an experience, we can only learn by walking with them. I do not know what it is like to be poor, I only know what it is like to

who are poor. This is not the same but is helpful. Someone asked the question about intervention to halt the aggression toward innocent people. We acknowledge we often accept the need for intervention. However intervention is not the permanent solution. It is a stop gap measure to prevent any more harm to anyone, guilty or innocent. Intervention does not resolve the conflict. Someone noted that the cases where conflict was resolved and peace restored was by non violent action that showed respect for everyone on either side of the conflict. Someone noted that America is asleep, unaware of the future we are creating for the world. It is difficult to wake those who are sleeping. It is even more difficult to wake those who think they are awake but in reality are sleeping.

Our class discussion revealed how deeply embedded in our thinking is that the only way to deal with violence is with power. The solution lies with the power of government and our role is to be a voice to government. Also embedded in our thinking is the possibility of quick solutions with the use of force. As people of faith we are challenged to sow the seed of peace and wait patiently for the harvest. We must take the risk of walking with and understanding those called our enemies. We must stop supporting the barriers to our island of wealth and share the earth with the peoples of the earth.

We hope you enjoy the cooler weather and the rain as we do.

*Moses Mart*

### We Ain't Nothin' But Hound Dogs By Cheryl Crichley

Anyone who has been to my house will tell you that, coming from me, the title of this article is a compliment rather than an insult.

Dogs are highly regarded and spoiled rotten around my place. I was asked to write on the Mennonite Church USA Assembly in Atlanta in July, however, I gave an account to my church afterward, and those who have access to other Mennonite publications have probably read several other reports by now.

After the Assembly I took some time off work to complete an assignment for my graduate work...time in the house with my two dogs and myself. I remember a Quaker woman who spoke of her dogs following her around her house from room to room, and wanting to be near her. She made a comparison to how we should want to be with God in that way. As my dogs lay at my feet while I worked I was reminded of this, and it led me to reflect on some of the delegate sessions in Atlanta.

Our dogs want to be as close to us as possible, especially if they hear thunder, or they are afraid, for example sitting in the waiting room at the veterinarian's office. They often look up into our faces while we speak to them, as if they are trying to figure out what we are saying...what we expect of them, and what they

should do. Sometimes, they interpret our commands correctly, and sometimes they do not. Other times, it seems they understand, but do just the opposite. These are all behaviors that remind me of my relationship with God, at certain times.

We sat around the tables at the delegate sessions in Atlanta, grappling with difficult decisions. I believe that we sought to be in the presence of God as we worked...to follow him around the house. We listened for his voice, and tried to interpret the writings and commands in his words. It was not easy...like my dogs, we do not have the language skills required. Some delegates seemed very sure of what they were hearing, and others did not. You could almost see us turning our heads to the side as we tried to understand.

All that we can really know is that God loves us, and we should try to please our heavenly master, just as our dogs try to please us. Like our dogs, we can follow as closely as possible, listen carefully, try to discern what we hear, do what we understand to be the right thing, and trust that we will be provided for. We are told that someday this frustration of "seeing through a glass darkly" will end. We will be invited to live in the house of our beloved master forever, and we will finally be able to comprehend and communicate clearly with him and with each other. We may even be allowed on the sofa...

#### August Revisited

Moses and Sadie Mast and Karin Evans attended the Western District meetings in Moundridge, KS on Aug. 1 & 2<sup>nd</sup>. The following Sunday, Moses was asked to speak at the First Mennonite Church, about the Iraqi relief efforts that Joy Mennonite is involved with. After the service an offering was given for the relief fund and over \$225.00 were donated.

Aug. 17<sup>th</sup>, a potluck was held following morning services, in honor of several anniversaries and to celebrate the return of the Bliss family and Jessica Warkentine from their summer work at camp. Minnesota was the location for this years excursion, to a camp for children with various special needs.

Melissa Warkentine had an eventful summer also. She participated in a work group that went to Kentucky to help repair

houses for low income families there. The people that she met and worked with made a big impact on Melissa and talking with her about her experiences has been a real treat.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Tabor family. Damon Tabor passed away unexpectedly on Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup>. Damon was a young man with deep feelings on many different ideas. I personally enjoyed talking with him and he will be sorely missed by all.

Also, prayers are asked for two friends of Joy Mennonite. Dolleene Kilpatrick and Willie C. Berry are experiencing health challenges right now and would appreciate your participation.

#### Coming Events

Preaching schedule for the month of Sept. is as follows: Moses Mast - 7<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>, Robt. Nolt - 21<sup>st</sup>, and Karin Evans - 28<sup>th</sup>. There will be a potluck after the services on the 21<sup>st</sup> and all are welcome.

The All Oklahoma Mennonite Womensmeeting will be held Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> at First Mennoite Church in Clinton, OK. Contact Sadie Mast for more information.

Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, will be Oklahoma Convention. Here again, call Sadie for further details.

Crop Walk will be Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm on the south side of the Capitol building on Lincoln Blvd. In OKC. Please join us if you can.

And my favorite, MCC Relief Sale, to be held this year on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> at the county fairgrounds in Enid, OK. I know, I know, I talk about this A LOT, but let's face it, this is definitely a worthy charity. Come talk to me there, I'll be looking for you. We are still on the world wide web at [www.joy.us.mennonite.net](http://www.joy.us.mennonite.net) And you can contact us at the web site or Cheryl Crichley at [storyweaver@swbell.net](mailto:storyweaver@swbell.net) or me, Debbie O'Neal, at [mennomomg11@yahoo.com](mailto:mennomomg11@yahoo.com)

#### Joy Mennonite Church

504 NE 16<sup>th</sup> OKC OK 73104

Sunday Services 10:00 am Sunday School 11:30

All are welcome, please join us as you are able.



#### Joy Mennonite Church

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